

EPA-BBL-4198

"Shoren Brown"  
<SBrown@tu.org>  
10/25/2010 05:58 PM

To Phil North, Michael Szerlog, Cara Steiner-Riley  
cc  
bcc  
Subject FW: Letter on Bristol Bay to Administrator Jackson

2 attachments



Resolution of the Assembly of the Orthodox Diocese of Sitka.pdf Bristol Bay Letter.pdf

FYI

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**From:** Tyler [mailto:tedgar@nccecojustice.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 25, 2010 2:47 PM  
**To:** Shoren Brown  
**Subject:** Letter on Bristol Bay to Administrator Jackson

Hi Shoren –

I wanted to share with you the letter that the NCC and some of its denominations sent to Administrator Jackson.

The National Council of Churches is an ecumenical body that represents 36 Christian denominations and 45 million people around the United States.

I also included the resolution from the Orthodox Diocese in Alaska that was passed last year which is a great piece that has helped educate the broader faith community about the issue and importance of water in Alaska.

Please feel free to forward this to anyone who you believe would be interested in the faith community's position on the proposed mine in Bristol Bay.

Thanks and looking forward to working with you.  
Blessings,  
Tyler

Tyler Edgar  
Associate Director, Eco-Justice Program  
Climate and Energy Campaign Manager  
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\*\*Please use the above number when trying to reach me by phone

**Resolution of the Assembly of the Orthodox Diocese of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska  
Concerning the Sanctity of the Earth and the Responsibility all Alaskan Native People  
serve as its Guardians and Protectors**

Whereas, according to the traditions and teachings of Alaska Native peoples, the Earth and the whole creation have always been perceived and experienced as filled with the sacred presence of Life, and

Whereas, historically Alaska Native peoples have approached all living and life-sustaining elements with reverence and respect, and

Whereas, in the Sacred Scriptures our Orthodox Christian Tradition, the creation of the world began with the Spirit of God moving on the face of the Deep, and

Whereas, God so loved the KOSMOS, meaning the whole creation, that He sent His Son into the world to bless, renew and sanctify it, and

Whereas, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Our Lord Jesus Christ came first to the waters of the Jordan and

Whereas, at the time of His baptism, the Holy Trinity was revealed as the Voice of the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended upon the waters in the form of a Dove to renew the creation, and

Whereas, in commemoration of the Baptism of Our Lord each year the Church celebrates the Great Blessing of Water at lakes, streams and on the coasts of the seas and oceans, and

Whereas, in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, the Great Blessing of Waters is a normal and regular feature of every baptism and

Whereas, the parishes of the Orthodox Diocese, founded at Kodiak in 1794 have been conducting this rite of blessing and sanctification for more than two hundred years in Alaska, and

Whereas, it is therefore the belief and sacred tradition of Alaskan Orthodox people that the lakes, rivers, streams and ocean are sacred to us, and

Whereas, that which is sacred must be treated with utmost respect, care and reverence and guarded from any danger of defilement, desecration or pollution,

Be it resolved that the Orthodox Church in Alaska calls upon all appropriate state and federal agencies to reject any so-called commercial or economic “development” that in any way threatens the viability, purity and sanctity of the natural world, especially the rivers and lakes which we hold sacred by both God’s original blessing and the continued invocation of the Holy Spirit to bless and sanctify the rivers and lakes along which our communities have been established for thousands of years, and

Be it further Resolved that the Orthodox Church in Alaska welcomes and invokes God's Blessing upon all those who would bring economic development to our communities provided they can prove by successful and continuing operation elsewhere on earth, (and not hypothetically or theoretically), that they can conduct such activities without potential or significant harm to the natural environment or polluting the waters which we hold blessed and sacred.

Ms. Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

October 25, 2010

Dear Administrator Jackson,

As people of faith, we are called to be good stewards of God's Creation and to seek justice for all of God's people. We write to you with great concern for the proposed mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska and believe that any mine in this area would threaten the health and well-being of this natural system as well as the native and fishing communities around the Bay. We believe the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a significant role to play in the proposed mine's development and urge you to initiate a 404(c) process to ensure protection for God's Creation and people in Bristol Bay.

Bristol Bay provides one of the last truly healthy and productive salmon fisheries in North America and the world. Each year, millions of salmon return to the Bristol Bay watershed to spawn. This annual run has continued to support the native Alaskan's subsistence lifestyle, hundreds of commercial fishermen and their families who fish Bristol Bay every summer, and thousands of sport fishermen for whom Bristol Bay is a "destination." In addition to the economic and community benefits that the Bay provides, the health of the salmon population ensures the health of the entire Bay including grizzly bears, bald eagles, and the whole of God's creation in the Bay.

Of particular importance to the faith community are the environmental justice implications of the proposed mine and the impact that the mine would have on native Alaskan communities in the Bristol Bay watershed. Six native tribes live in the Bristol Bay watershed, and the salmon that return to the Bay every year provide for more than 50 percent of an average native Alaskan's diet. Bristol Bay's pristine water and the salmon that thrive here are a vital part of the native Alaskan culture that has survived for centuries. A mine would threaten the health and well-being of the native communities and creation that live here.

If developed, the proposed mine would threaten all of this. Reports have shown that the Pebble Mine would be the largest open-pit hard-rock mine in North America covering more than 28 square miles with the largest dam in the world as part of the mine complex. According to the mining companies, the proposed mine would produce up to nine billion tons of waste, containing toxic substances such as aluminum, arsenic, lead, mercury, selenium and naturally radioactive material. Any release of this combination of metals and toxic substances would threaten the well-being of creation and communities in and around the Bay.

The EPA will play a large role in the permitting process of this mine and we urge you to take proactive steps that will fully explore the potential impacts that a mine of this scale would have on Bristol Bay. Specifically, we urge you to initiate a 404(c) process as outlined under the Clean Water Act which would outline the impacts of the mine's waste on the area's water quality, a vital component of God's creation, and prevent the use of the Bristol Bay watershed as a dumping ground for toxic mining waste. We look forward to working with you in protecting Bristol Bay in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

National Council of Churches USA

Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

Contact:

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